

4. Warfare

236 The Caribs never go to war openly against their enemies, but only smack them by surprise. Nevertheless, they make great preparations, assembling many pirogues and canoes. They only take one woman into each boat to comb their hair and paint them, as well as to prepare their food. Finally they arrive at the place agreed upon. If they are discovered they utter cries which terrify everyone, and they kill all whom they chance to meet. They let loose a flight of arrows to which burning cotton is fastened and set fire to everything.

237 Three hours later they retire until they plan some new enterprise. They kill their prisoners with blows of clubs. If some of the prisoners are women they take them home and give them to the old men as wives and slaves. If they capture male children they regard them as slaves, but if the males are older they force them to fast, because the Caribs do not like to eat fat, and then they kill them. [378]

238 The Caribs during their drinking parties, which sometimes last two or three days, make speeches to each other about the great exploits of their ancestors. This is to arouse their spirits and make them fight more bravely against their enemies. The women and the young

239 people do not understand this language. Only in the speeches which they make during the work parties, do they use a style which although very elaborate, is nevertheless intelligible to all. [378] All their harangues, which they make so frequently, are only war speeches to excite themselves against their enemies. Even the human flesh they

240 eat at this time is for this same purpose, because they eat it in such small quantities. However, I think that when they have it in large quantities they eat all they can, because I heard it said here that when they killed three of our missionaries at Puerto Rico they smoked them. But during the meal they became so greatly disgusted that they dared not look at them. [222]

When they are going to eat an Arawak there is singing, dancing, and rejoicing. At the beginning of my stay in Dominica, my host, Captain Barron, had killed and brought back an Arawak from South America. He had a great drinking party and invited anyone who wished to come. He gave each woman a part of the Arawak to cook in her own pot so that she could eat it with her husband and family who were in the assembly. This they did with great enjoyment during the day. After having drunk and been entertained in their